

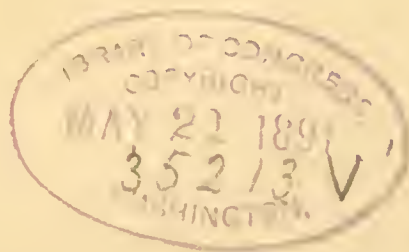
POEMS

GERTRUDE ALGER.

POEMS

BY

GERTRUDE ALGER.



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Gertrude Alger was born May 19, 1868, and died October 25, 1889.

These Poems are arranged by her Mother.

CONTENTS.

1882.

	PAGE
Dandelions	9
Sunset	10

1883.

Song	13
The Lorelei	14
Dead	19
Dawn	20
Trial of the Bow	21
Indian Love Song	23
To —	25
Pictures. — To I. M. A.	27
November Night	29
Early Spring	30
To —	31
To a Pigeon	33

1884.

Song	37
Song	38
May Memories	39
Flower Songs	41

1885.

Morning Wind	45
The Fringed Gentian	47
A Question. To —	49
To My Lady	50
Midsummer	51
Slumber Song	52
Summer Rain	54
On —	55

	PAGE
Marjorie	56
Summer Night	57
The Rose	58
Twilight	60
Lullaby	61
Song	62
Song	64
The Dandelion	65
A Winter Day	66
Love Song	67

1886.

Love-Lies-Bleeding	71
The Daisy	72
Song	73
Summer Twilight	74
Song of Dryope	75
The Fountain of Youth	78
Sorrow	79
To E. A. M.	81
A Dream	82

1887.

The Wind	87
Hindu Legend	88
Out of the Gray	89
In a Snowstorm	90
At Park Slide, Montreal	91
Wind and Rose	92

1888.

Fireflies	95
A Friend	96
To May T.	97
To a Lovely Girl	98
The Ideal	99

1882

DANDELIONS.

WITH dandelions the meadows are aglow,
Just slightly swaying with a sturdy grace
Whene'er 'mongst them the wanton zephyrs chase.
They laugh and smile within the glad sunlight;
Or seem to laugh, and almost look as though,
At the last close of the soft summer night,
Each little star, within the depths of blue
Above, had on a sudden left its place,
And fallen like a gleaming jewel bright,
Until it reached the meadows far below,
Bathed in a fairy flood of dripping dew,
And here each twinkling star had made a bed;
So on this morn, within the grass so green,
In every place peeps out a starry head,
While not a single star in heaven is seen.

SUNSET.

THE towers of Night's palace in the west
Loomed grandly up above the mountain's crest,
And in their rising might seemed to defy
The fast-declining sun, who angrily,
As a last token of his glowing power,
Against the purple walls uphurled a shower
Of golden shafts and arrows, keen and fierce,
That though they wildly struck, yet could not pierce,
And after one mad flash, were seen no more,
Leaving Night's columns lofty as before.

1883

SONG.

My heart shall be thy gentle grave,
Wherein thy form shall rest ;
Fond thoughts, like flowers, will softly wave
Above thy silent breast.

Like sparkling dew, my tears of pain
Will keep them fresh and bright ;
My love, like to the sun, shall rain
Upon them streams of light.

My gentle sighs, like fanning breeze,
Their starry heads shall wave ;
And softly will the drooping trees
Cast shadows on thy grave.

My heart — and, oh, with faithful trust
'Twill pillow thy loved head !
And not until its walls are dust
Will it give up its dead.

THE LORELEI.

A LORELEI sat, with a lyre in her hand,
On a rock in a flowing sea,
And she watched the breakers wild and grand
As they bounded merrily.
The bright sun, sinking in a west
Of shimmering, purple haze,
Over the ocean's heaving breast
Cast its departing rays ;
While far in the east a jagged mass
Of gloomy clouds appeared,
And now and then a sudden flash
Told that a tempest neared.
The mischievous eyes of the fair mermaid
Gleamed out like sparks of fire ;
While her restless fingers lightly played
With the strings of her golden lyre.
The breezes stirred her streaming hair,
And they kissed her glowing cheek ;
While anon a sea-gull rent the air
With a wild, unearthly shriek.
Lower the sun set, lower too,
Till at last it sank from sight ;

Greater each moment the black clouds grew,
And brighter each flash of light.
And now and then a muffled roar
Struck on the siren's ear,
That every time grew more and more
Terrible to hear.
When, lo ! a ship had swept in sight,
A ship with swelling sail ;
The Lorelei laughed with a mad delight,
And on came the rushing gale.
Nearer and nearer the vessel sped,
While the rain in torrents poured ;
The night grew black as grave of the dead,
And loud the thunder roared.
Then the Lorelei lifted her voice and sang,
All amid the tempest's noise,
Till the air and the clanging heavens rang
With the sound of her glorious voice.

SONG.

List to me, list to me,
If thou wouldst know
Of the wonderful sea
Far down below,
Low, low.

It is deep, it is deep,
And the way is steep ;
There beasts ne'er creep,
But swim as they go,
So, so.

There the dolphins ride,
And the gold-fish glow ;
The sirens glide,
And the great whales blow,
Blow, blow.

The castles grand
Of the sea-kings stand
In this beauteous land,
'Neath the ocean's flow,
Flow, flow.

For the kings and earls
These towers grow ;
With coral and pearls
They brightly glow,
Glow, glow.

Follow me, follow me,
If thou wouldst go
And the wonders see,
Far down below,
Go, go.

The sailors heard as though spell-bound ;
They could not stir, nor move.
But when had ceased the wondrous sound,
Right on the vessel drove ;
On through the boiling, surging main
That leapt about its prow

In foaming showers, and fell again
Like white and drifting snow.
On it swept toward the very spot
From whence had come the voice
That had with fear filled every heart,
Yet made each heart rejoice ;
When, suddenly, lo ! a lurid glare
Lit up the whole wild place,
And the shuddering sailors then and there
Saw the Lorelei face to face.
It was a grand and glorious sight,
Yet terrible as could be :
On a rock that loomed to a fearful height
Right out of the raging sea,
Sat the Lorelei, veiled in her long, long hair,
That wildly gleamed and flashed ;
She looked like a statue, white and fair,
While the spray about her dashed.
She held within one hand, upraised,
Her lyre of shining gold ;
The sailors, trembling as they gazed,
Their hands in prayer did fold.
But when had died the ghastly gleam,
And all was dark once more,
Far blacker did the black night seem
Than it had been before ;
As oft when we a flower cull
From Pleasure's smiling bowers,
Sorrow doth seem more stern and dull
Than e'er the joy was ours.

Lo ! suddenly a fearful shock
The fated ship o'erswept;
It had run prone into the very rock —
High in the air it leapt,
Then down it went with all its hoard,
Down in the driving gale,
And not one man, of all on board,
Remained to tell the tale.
Then the Lorelei dived far down, far down,
And laughed and sang with glee,
Oh, sailors, beware ! Oh, sailors, take care !
Don't list to a voice in the sea.

DEAD.

THE sky slopes down to the sea,
And they both are dull and gray ;
The crawling waves move sullenly.

The tree-tops point away,
And wave their arms to the blast ;
Night closes the eyes of the day.

The time of the flower is past ;
The blossom that once was red
Is withering where it is cast.

The maiden lies in her bed,
The dimple gone from her cheek,
The smile from her silent lips fled ;

Her forehead is white and meek,
And her wind-flower hands are crossed
In a prayer that she cannot speak.

Oh, what to her is the frost !
The waves that sob as they go !
And the blossom whose blush is lost !

Oh, what to her is the woe
That mourns in my breaking heart
For a joy I never shall know !

DAWN.

A PEARLY light is breaking in the east ;
The little sleepy stars, with half-shut eyes,
Are fading from the gray of velvet skies,
Glad from their restless watch to be released.

As one by one their lids drop softly down,
The heavens with dawning life are all astir ;
While wreaths of silvery mist wax rosier
That, snake-like, curl about the mountain's crown.

A shaft of gold, sent from an unseen bow,
Has pierced that wall which shuts the day from night,
And liquidly, a flood of opal light
Pours slowly through and bathes the earth below.

TRIAL OF THE BOW.

To bend the bow each suitor vainly strove ;
For his most desperate strength it would not move ;
And one and all to yield it up were forced,
Reluctant, for they knew the queen was lost.
Then spoke the ragged beggar who was by,
Saying : " Give *me* the bow, and let me try ;
For though I am a beggar, as ye see,
I once could wield the spear right manfully."
The suitors loudly jeered at his request,
And would not grant the poor man any rest ;
But sought to turn him straightway from the hall,
For there was no compassion 'mong them all.
Then merrily Telemachus exclaimed,
" The man for poverty can not be blamed ;
And if *ye* all agree, I'm sure that *I*
Full willingly consent that he should try."
The bow was passed him without more ado ;
" Now shall ye judge if my old eye be true."
He quickly bent the bow and drew the string,
And sent the fatal arrow through each ring.
Then, as in consternation all stood dumb,
He coolly said, " And now the time has come
That I should try another mark, I wot ! "

And in the throat the foremost suitor shot.
Telemachus sprang well armed to his side,
Eumæus followed him unterrified;
And while the frightened suitors gazed around,
Seeking in vain for arms that ne'er were found,
The beggar sudden doffed his rags and stood
In his own form, Ulysses, great and good.
“Now, hark unto my voice, ye sinners all,
For 'tis the last that on your ears shall fall.
I am the one whom ye have wronged, I say,
Squandered my fortune recklessly away,
Nigh slain my son, Telemachus, and more,
Brought my loved wife to Persecution's door.
Like withered leaves ye shall be swept away,
For of my wrongs I'll be avenged this day.”
They wildly strove his mercy to regain,
But it availed them naught, for all were slain.

INDIAN LOVE SONG.

FROM the shadow of the forest, where the night-winds moan
and shiver,
And between its treacherous ridges flows the white, wild-
rushing river,
Like a great and wondrous arrow from the hidden bow-string
flying
Of some mighty Indian warrior in the midnight darkness
lying,
Where the poisonous snakes are lurking 'neath the ferns so
tall and stately,
Like the plumes and feathers waving o'er his dusky brow
sedately ;
While the spotted lilies tremble as they crouch about that
lone one —
From the shadow of the forest do I come to thee, my
own one.

Through the clouds the moon is riding like a sachem great
in story,
While the stars, his warriors, cluster all around to view his
glory ;
And they love to do his bidding, to his counsel love to
hearken :
All his words are full of wisdom, and his light can never
darken.

Round his neck are strings of wampum, gold and silver
 brightly gleaming ;
O'er his shoulder and his bosom is the gentle radiance
 streaming ;
Many beads have fallen downward through the air in rolling
 showers,
'Tween the branches of the cedars, where they sparkle on
 the flowers.

Come with me, my dark-eyed sweetheart, to the forest still
 and lonely !
We will roam the hills together ; Love shall rule us, and
 Love only.
I will make thy couch of rose-leaves where the arrowy ferns
 are swinging,
And every morning shall the birds awake thee with their
 singing.
The forest lily I will lay upon thy tender bosom,
And for thy purple tresses I will pluck the red, red blossom.
We shall be freer than the wind that o'er the prairie rushes !
Oh, come with me ! ere yet the dawn hath trembled into
 blushes.

TO ———

O DEAR, dead friend, upon thy grave
The flowers of spring in beauty wave —
Red buds, with drops of dew impearled,
And baby ferns, but half uncurled ;
While purple banks of violet bloom
Make faint the air with sweet perfume.

Above thy bed a grand old tree
Bends down its branches lovingly ;
The blossoms flushing in the light,
Like clouds of foamy pink and white,
Down-dropping when the zephyrs blow,
Like drifting flakes of rosy snow.

Near by from many a leafy heap
The trembling wind-flowers shyly peep,
Like white-veiled nuns, with drops of dew
For rosaries, while shining through
Their snowy drapery, one may see
The virgin blush of modesty.

All day, half-hid in buds, is heard
The liquid twitter of some bird ;

While soft and sad and sweet and lone,
As sigh of harp Æolian,
The breezes whisper through the trees,
Awaking strangest melodies.

O dearest one, though thou art gone,
Thou hast not left me quite alone ;
For death, though clinging hands he parts,
May have no power o'er our hearts,
And while mine eyes with hot tears fill,
I know we love each other still.

PICTURES.—TO I. M. A.

A PEARLY sail, like a lonely dream
Fading away on the ocean's breast ;
A tired sun, drooping in a west
Of rose, pale daffodil, and cream ;
A wind that sighs ere it falls asleep,
And its tiptoes ruffle the stilly deep.

A sail, like a leaf dropt from a rose,
Pink as the clouds that flood the sky ;
A sea, that blushes like maiden shy ;
A west, that shimmers and flames and glows ;
A wind, that, lying as still as death,
Scarce heaves its bosom in gentle breath.

A silver sail, like a feather, dropt
From the wing of an angel floating past,
And low on the shadowy waters cast ;
A wind, whose slumber has sudden stopt,
And now it whispers and softly sighs ;
While the goddess, Dian, reigns in the skies.

A sail, like a shadow dark and gray ;
Some black clouds, hovering in the west ;

A sea, that trembles as though distressed ;
A moon, that frightened, has hid away ;
While the wind cries strangely, and seems to moan
With a weird, mysterious undertone.

A sail, that gleams like a specter white
And shivers blue in the lightning's glare ;
A sea, that howls in a wild despair,
Writhing and shuddering in its might.
The thunder roars till the skies are rent,
And the wind raves madly, on death intent.

A sail, deep hidden 'neath boiling sea ;
Its rose, and silver, and pearl all past ;
Under the waves 'tis driven fast,
And is no more what it used to be ;
While the changeful wind doth in anguish wail,
For the hearts gone down with the lowly sail.

NOVEMBER NIGHT.

WITH haggard form all draped in somber black,
And plumes that shiver sadly in the wind
And sweep her pallid brow, while, unconfined,
Her dull, dead locks stream rigidly behind,—
Like some strange, restless spirit wandered back
From World of Shadows, — on her frozen track
The dark November night steals noiseless by,
With head dropped on her breast, and sighing mourn-
fully.

No sound betrays her footstep as she speeds,
While ghastly blue her quivering lip appears,
And from between her stony lids the tears
Drop frozenly, and fringe the jutting spears
Of wiry thorn and naked bush, with beads
Of gleaming ice ; yet none her anguish heeds.
The stiffened fingers of her thin white hands
Refuse to closer fold her mantle's loosening bands.

No friendly moon hangs high its shield of gold,
Down-tossing all its maze of silver spars ;
The wailing night winds have blown out the stars ;
The heavens have closed their iron prison bars,
And left the silent earth in gloom and cold,
Alone with that weird presence, strange and old,
Who now flies wildly on like some black cloud,
And in her frenzy beats her breast and shrieks aloud.

EARLY SPRING.

WITH a snowdrop in her bosom, and a snowflake on her hair,
The early Spring is standing in her garments fresh and fair ;
 All sweet as with perfume
 Of the flowers yet to bloom,
That have not e'en put forth their buds to greet her standing
 there,
With a snowdrop in her bosom, and a snowflake on her hair.

Softly shine the pussy-willows in their furry coats a-sway,
With a vivid flush of crimson sudden breaking through the
 gray,
 As with their downy tips
 They touch her rosy lips,
And, soon as she looks up to smile, whisk saucily away,
All a-shaking, all a-quaking, in their furry coats of gray.

TO ———

STAND not upon the windy crest
Of this high hill,
To watch the sun-god in the west
The wine distill
In ruby drops, and round his breast
Rich robes of red and purple fold,
Edged deep with gold.

Lest, as thy wondering eyes are cast
Upon him there,
Forgetting quite what charms thou hast,
What beauties rare,
His thoughts may turn to love at last,
Enraptured of thy marvelous face,
Thy flower-like grace.

For art thou not as fair in truth
As she, whose eyes,
Whose pensive loveliness and youth
Drew forth his sighs !
May not her fate be thine, forsooth !
Thou wilt another Daphne be ;
Ah ! turn and flee !

The fiery jewels of his crown
Flash through the air ;
He flings a thousand rubies down
To deck thy hair ;
He looks on thee with mighty frown,
And seems almost to hesitate.
Art thou too late !

TÓ A PIGEON.

OH, tell me, thou sweet bird, whose wings of whiteness
Glimmer like silver waving through the air,
Didst thou not fall from that one spot of brightness,
That single snow-white cloud the heavens bear?

It may be thou hast risen from the ocean,
Like her of whom the tireless poet sings ;
The happy ocean breezes lent thee motion,
And blew thee here, the foam yet on thy wings.

There are but six stars where there should be seven ;
Are they thy gentle sisters, pale and coy,
And thou that lonely pleiad, lost to heaven,
Who could not brook the sight of ruined Troy?

1884

SONG.

I THOUGHT my heart was all my own ;
But it had wings to me unknown.

Ah, foolish me !

I dreamed it not until, one day,
It spread them out and flew away ;
And though I seek, in grief and pain,
I cannot find my heart again.

Ah, foolish me.

SONG.

HEAVEN is great and far away,
Yet often in my hand it lay —
 In five fair finger-tips.
And when she smiled — all Paradise,
Enraptured, melted in her eyes,
 And played about her lips.

But when she let her eyelids fall,
And blushed — the hovering angels all,
 Methinks, themselves did grow
A rosy pink for jealousy ;
She was so wondrous fair, ah, me !
 So dangerous sweet to know.

MAY MEMORIES.

APPLE blooms, white-winged and ruffled, all a flutter in the breeze ;
Pink peach blossoms floating lightly downward from the orchard trees ;
Spicy scents of perfume stirring where the baby violets lie,
Closely nestled all together underneath the soft May sky,
Lifting up in childlike wonder their sweet eyes, so bonny blue,
With a gleam of roguish laughter breaking through their tearful dew.

Standing still, in pensive musing, by the crumbling orchard wall,
Maiden Dorothy. About her rosy blossoms drift and fall.
Nor the blossoms, nor the violets are more sweet than she,
or fair,
With the golden shafts of sunlight broken in her misty hair ;
And the dreamy thoughts and fancies of her blushing maidenhood,
Shining from her eyes of hazel with a tender light subdued.

Soft I whisper, " O heart's dearest ! Heaven made thee to be loved !
One hath but to look upon thee, and the gentle truth is proved ;

One hath but to know thy nature — what hath Heaven made
more sweet?

Oh, the very ground beneath thee is far dearer for thy feet!
Dorothy, I love thee, dearest, with the passion of my soul;
With a passion and a fervor that have gone beyond control."

And I seize her trembling fingers, gazing at her all the while,
See the lips begin to quiver, ere they break into a smile;
See the rosy, yielding dimples coming softly in her cheek,
And I look on her with rapture, trusting not myself to speak;
See the happy tears o'erflowing. Heart, thou knowest all
the rest!

Earth is but another heaven, as I clasp her to my breast.

Ah! it seemeth but a day; yet 'twas many years ago.
Everywhere the pink peach blossoms flutter softly to and fro.

FLOWER SONGS.

I.

HARK 'ee, pretty Golden-Rod, leaning o'er the brook,
How I wish that at your face I might catch a look !
Yet you'll never let me peep, though I know 'tis fair,
Hid completely out of sight by your yellow hair.
Shake those sunny tresses back ; why are you so shy ?
None to see, except myself and a butterfly !
'Tis so still and shady here where the willows nod,
Won't you let me have one peep, pretty Golden-Rod ?

II.

Sleepy little Gentians, it is time to rise,
For the sun is climbing fast up the rosy skies,
And the happy brooklets are laughing where they leap ;
Don't you hear them in your dreams as you lie asleep ?
Lift those fair fringed lashes up, shut so very tight,
Hiding from your sweet blue eyes all the golden light ;
What can you be dreaming, that you slumber so,
Sleepy little Gentians, I should like to know !

1885

THE MORNING WIND.

FROM the meadow streaked with pink,
In the morning's waking blushes,
Comes the wind with dancing feet
Blithely to the water's brink ;
Low before him bend the rushes
With a murmur strange and sweet.

Far away he sees the mist —
Upward from the hill-sides foaming —
Into waves of scarlet break ;
And where clouds of amethyst
Up the eastern skies are roaming
In the path the sun will take.

At his feet the golden-rods
Shake apart their tresses sunny,
As entreating to be wooed ;
And the tall hibiscus nods,
Quaintly courtesies, sweet with honey,
Peering from her rosy hood —

Half awake and half asleep,
Growing shyer every minute
At the words she hears him say.

Oh, her hood is far too deep !
And he stoops to look within it ;
Yet she ever turns away ;

Will not hearken when he pleads :
“ Well I know your face is pretty ;
Let me peep, nor deem it bold ! ”
And the rushes and the reeds
Sigh and sigh for very pity
That the maiden is so cold.

THE FRINGED GENTIAN.

SHE grew alone in a marshy place,
Frail and tender and half afraid
To open her eye and look on the world.
She could dreamily hear what the stiff grass said,
 Bending across her face,
And the hunting song of the winds o'erhead,
Sweeping by with wing unfurled,
 In never-ending chase ;
And she could hear, full wonderingly,
How, when the voices of those that had passed
 Grew faint and soft
For distance, dying in sighs at the last,
Lost in the breath of the panting sea,
 Another band
Came swooping downward from skies aloft
 Over the land,
With voices rolling and wild and grand.

Each hour the timid blossom grew
In wonder ; yet she might not dare
To open her eye and look on the world.
 She knew that the world was fair ;
Each wild bird cried it as he flew
 Merrily over her head,

And the brown bees told her, that flit and flit,
And the cardinal flowers, flaming red,
 Leant over and whispered it ;
But, still afraid, she never uncurled
Those soft fringed lashes so tightly knit.

At last, one early morn, she felt
She might no longer wait ; a thrill
Of sudden ecstasy swept through
And through her ; or was it a beam
 Of rich September light ?
For all her fear began to melt,
And slowly, tremblingly, she drew
Apart her folded lids, until,
 O wondrous, waking dream !
Up bravely looked she on the world
 With her sweet eye of blue.
What did she see ? A bit of bright
Blue sky, with cloudy fleeces curled ;
A bird, like a shadow, drifting by ;
A tuft of grasses, feathered and sere,
 Waving merrily,
And a yellow-haired golden-rod standing near.

A QUESTION.

TO ———

IF everything that happens is God's will,
Both good and ill,
Then say wherein
Rests man's responsibility? Though sin
Go hand in hand with him through ways of shame,
Is man to blame?

If everything that happens is God's will,
Both good and ill,
What credit hath
That man who ever shuns the evil path,
And treads with feet that do not hesitate
The true and straight?

TO MY LADY.

WHAT doth she lack in being Night !

In all her motions dreamy-soft
Is she, and gentle as the flight
Of noiseless, purple clouds aloft ;
Or fall of dusk at twilight hour,
Or as the waving of a flower.

What doth she lack in being Night !

Her voice is like the evening song
Of breezes, bearing in their flight
The perfume of a rose along ;
Or like the night winds in the wheat,
It is so low and soft and sweet.

What doth she lack in being Night !

She is all darkness in her eyes,
Still and subdued, where never light,
But only brooding softness lies,
Made softer by the shadows thrown
From her dark lashes, falling down.

What doth she lack in being Night ?

The shadow of her dusky hair —
A silver crescent resting light,
And scattered golden stars, should bear ;
For if she lacked not these, I ween,
She'd be, in very truth, Night's queen !

MIDSUMMER.

WHERE poppies, dusky red,
Nod sleepily beside the garden wall,
Heavy with damp night dews, weird shadows fall
From charmèd boughs o'erhead.

Distinct each separate leaf,
And set in golden-black against the deep,
Dark amber sky, where twilight still doth keep
Her vigils all too brief.

The breeze forgets to play,
And still it is, as if indeed each tree
Held all its little hands out warningly
To bid the winds away.

SLUMBER SONG.

HUSHABY, my baby daughter !
To and fro across the water,
In the pathway of the sun,
See the slumber fairies run !
Back and forth, and to and fro,
Softly tiptoe as they go,
And so light their footsteps fall,
Scarce a ripple breaks at all.

What is it that each doth bear
On her bosom with such care ;
Fold so tenderly, and press
In her arms with soft caress ?
Why, I can't but think that, maybe,
'Tis a precious little baby
That each fairy of the band
Takes away to slumber-land.

Faintly, o'er the summer sea,
Waft their dreamy songs to me ;
Lullabies as soft and sweet
As the winds amid the wheat !
“ Hushaby ! ” low “ Hushaby ! ”

Tell me where doth dream-land lie?
On the earth, or in the sky?
“Hushaby!” low “Hushaby!”

Where, on idle waves afloat,
Rocking like a golden boat,
Softly lies the sun at rest,
In the purple folded west —
There the slumber fairies run,
Holding fast each little one,
Bonny baby, half asleep;
While the rosy sunbeams creep.

To the golden boat they go,
Swinging gently to and fro.
It will bear them far away
From the night and from the day,
Right into the purple mist
Soft and clear as amethyst.
Right into the hazy light
It will bear them out of sight.

As it melts into the skies,
Far from mother's loving eyes,
She will bend her face down, maybe,
Just to kiss her darling baby;
But the little one, so dear,
She will find no longer here,
And will know she is afloat
With the fairies, in the boat.

SUMMER RAIN.

SPIRITS of the summer shower,
Tiptoeing from flower to flower,
Here and there, and everywhere,
 Tripping, tripping !
In between the petals fair
Of the blossoms, slipping, slipping !
 Dancing over
Rosy beds of nodding clover !
And I hear — or is it fancy ? —
All the garden flowers dipping,
 Swaying, tipping ;
Every rose and purple pansy
Curtsyng, now here, now there,
 Light as air ;
Bending low its pretty head
'Neath the shower-spirits' tread.

ON ———

IF thou shouldst ask what flower doth best compare
With her sweet looks — I'd fetch a damask rose ;
If with her nature — not a flower so fair
In all the wide earth grows.

(55)

MARJORIE.

A DREAMY maid was Marjorie,
Who heard what others may not hear,
And saw what others never see.
The secret of the evening breeze
She knew, and why so plaintively
He played his harp amid the trees.
And when she heard a mother sing
To sleep the baby on her breast,
She saw how the soft voice would bring
A cloud of sweet white angels near
To watch the little one at rest.

Whene'er was found, by morning light,
A rose with drooping head, full well
She knew that it had been awake
To see the moon-elves dance at night.
Whene'er a summer shower fell,
She saw the clouded fairies shake
Pearls from their magic cloaks ; and oft
At eve, when in the darkened sky
Each star hung out its golden bell,
Its far, faint pealing, sweet and soft,
Fell through the dusk to Marjorie.

SUMMER NIGHT.

A WIND swings down from the purple skies
To yon dark hill, with its wooded slopes,
And sweeps through the pines with long-drawn sighs.

The Moon flings downward her golden ropes
To the foot of her bower, by the shadowy sea,
Where haply her young lord-lover gropes.

Poor Lady Moon ! what a sight sees she !
And the luckless lover who waits below !
For the bright strands slip from her hold. Ah, me !

And out on the summer waves, that flow
In a slumberous silence, they fall, and far
Through the amber waters they shine and glow.

From the dreaming heavens each sweet young star
In pity looks on the saddened knight,
And each to the other whispers, " Ah ! "

THE ROSE.

A LASSIE fair, she heard at morn
Her shepherd lover wind his horn,
And stepping to the lattice near
She flung it wide, and bent to hear,
And peeped to see where he might be,
Her shepherd lad so dear.

She spied him on a windy hill,
Blowing his horn with right good will ;
And binding up her yellow hair,
She put a bonnie rosebud there ;
For " Is't a sin," quoth she, " to win
His love by being fair ? "

She rubbed her glass full bright and clear
And placed the flower behind her ear ;
And there it shook so saucily
The lassie could but laugh to see.
" If he delay to say his say,
Then false my rose will be."

Through meadow grasses dripping wet,
She hasted on, yet did not fret,
Nor pause, but gathered up her gown
In both her hands so wee and brown.

He saw her ere she was aware,
And from the hill came down.

Oh, sweetly, sweetly did she smile,
And in her pretty cheeks, the while,
The blushes came and dimples broke,
And softly flitted and awoke !
But oh, alas ! and woe, alas !
No word of love he spoke.

And oh, alas ! and woe, alas !
As homeward through the chilly grass
She took her way, with drooping head,
And all the pretty blushes fled,
Upon the ground below she found
A bonnie rosebud red.

A bonnie rose, the very same ;
For she had dropped it when she came.
She flung it far and far away,
And “ Oh,” she cried, “ alackaday !
For ah ! who knows but with the rose
He might have said his say ! ”

TWILIGHT.

FAR on the eastern hills the sweet young Night
Kneels, lost in silent prayer, like some lone nun
Veiled all in shadowy dusk ; while one by one
She tells her beads in the first stars that, bright
As drops of amber, show their early light,
And sparkle softly in the heavens dun.
About her still light-footed breezes run ;
She heeds not their approach, nor yet their flight,
So rapt in prayer is she ; nor sees she where,
Low at the purple western gates, the fair,
Reluctant Day still lingers, as she takes
One longing look upon the dark earth there
Before her, and in pensive silence shakes
The last red roses from her yellow hair.

LULLABY.

DEAR little face, like a soft, sleepy blossom,
Lying so warm on thy mother's fond bosom,
How peaceful thou art in thy gentle repose !
Hushaby, baby, and sink into rest !
The sweet summer day, folded up like a rose,
Hath dropped some pink petals low down in the west —
Why art thou awake, little one, on my breast ?

Why dost thou, then, turn those dark eyes full of wonder
Toward the new moon, softly glimmering yonder ?
Think'st thou 'tis some pretty cradle like thine,
Holding a bonny wee baby like thee,
With cheeks round and dimpled and ringlets as fine,
While all the night long angels watch it to see
That its slumbers both sweet and unbroken shall be ?

Oh, soft are the lullabies sung to that baby !
Such songs as thy mother will never know, maybe ;
She'll sing thee the softest and sweetest she knows.
Hushaby, baby, and sink into rest !
The tall daisies nod when the evening wind blows,
And two little stars have come out in the west
To peep at the baby asleep on my breast.

SONG.

'TWAS the pretty Spring came dancing, after Winter's reign
was done.

All the birds broke into song, she was so sweet to look upon ;
And all Nature seemed to brighten, from the plains, and hills
that reach

Towards the sky, — to silver waters rolling up the pebbly
beach.

And she laughed, the merry Springtime, as she tossed her
windy hair ;

Laughed to hear the busy gossip of the blackbirds everywhere ;
Laughed to see on slender branches where the pussy-willows
were

Curled so warm asleep, all shining in their coats of soft
gray fur.

Where the pretty Spring a-dancing touched to earth her
fairy feet,

Up a dainty wild-flower lifted its wee face so fresh and sweet ;
Well she knew that every footfall happy made a little child,
So full fast the fragrant blossoms opened to the light and
smiled.

Pretty Spring ! at every breaking of the dawn she fairer
grew ;

From her tresses shook the jewels down in sparkling drops
of dew ;
Paused she in her merry dancing, and, a-tiptoe, sought to reach
And imprint a rosy kiss on every blossom of the peach.

She has seen the wild March snowdrops like the snowflakes
melt away,
And has stepped o'er April violets to the richer flowers of
May.
Softly breaks a robin's twitter from amid the cherry blooms ;
Balmy winds are blowing where the lilacs shake their purple
plumes ;
Everywhere the apple blossoms, with their airy quiverings,
Look like tiny birds that flutter all day long their snowy
wings.
Sweet will be the rosy face of Summer, but all hearts
were won
When the pretty Spring came dancing, after Winter's reign
was done.

SONG.

To make a little love-song,
Oh, how vain to try!
When the heart is singing
Measures that defy
Words however tender,
Words however sweet;
'Tis the heart's glad music
Makes the song complete.

THE DANDELION.

Low on the breezy hill-side grew
A dandelion in sweet content ;
Soft was the sky that over her bent,
Life was sunny and new ;
And she spread her yellow frills apart,
Till a sunbeam broke on her happy heart.

Sorrow and pain are not for flowers ;
Never would she know aught of them ;
Brave and bright, on her sturdy stem,
She only laughed in the showers ;
And when night shadows began to creep,
She closed up softly, and went to sleep.

A WINTER DAY.

A WINTER day — and all
The earth is cold and dark and bare ;
While slowly, softly, through the air
The first white snowflakes fall.

A winter day — the skies,
Heavy with clouds, lean grayly down ;
The sad wind makes its presence known
Only by weary sighs.

A winter day — yet fair
To me as if the flakes of snow
Were summer flowers falling low
Through fragrant summer air.

A winter day — my heart !
And yet as beautiful to me
As if the gates of heaven might be
By angels flung apart.

LOVE SONG.

I LOVE thee so! I love thee so!
Only my heart alone can know.
Life, that ever was over-sweet,
Groweth more beautiful, more complete;
Heaven hath never been so close,
And every step is over a rose.

Glad new thoughts in my bosom call;
Love for thee meaneth love for all;
Tenderer pity for pain and woe,
Trouble and sorrow all men know;
Tenderer longing to help and give,
And make earth brighter because I live.

Daily duties, that mean so much,
Break and blossom, at Love's soft touch,
In sweetest flowers; each common care
Seemeth easy and light to bear.
Life's cup of joy is full, and, lo!
Love hath made it to overflow.

Happy birds on the swinging bough,
Your songs were never so sweet as now!
Summer flowers, oh, is it true
You ever were half so fair to view?
Heaven hath never been so close,
And every step is over a rose.

1886

LOVE-LIES-BLEEDING.

LACKADAY ! who ever spied
Such a woeful sight before !
Broken hearts strung side by side,
Shedding drops of gore.
Every heart, by rude wind shaken,
Means a bosom lone, forsaken,
Empty evermore.

At your naughty tricks again !
Cupid, well I wot 'twas you.
All these hearts, now pierced and slain,
Once were warm and true.
And I only wonder whether,
'Mong so many, strung together,
Mine be not there, too.

THE DAISY.

I SAW where whitest daisies grew,
And where the zephyr downward blew ;
Their snowy frills all fell a-shaking
In ever sprightly merry-making.

And yet with half indifferent eyes
I saw where whitest daisies grew
Beneath the blue of summer skies.

I saw where, in my lady's breast,
A lone white daisy made its nest ;
And, oh, so softly was it lying,
It quivered at her faintest sighing !

And I, that plucked no flowers before,
Would — for the daisy in her breast —
The whole wide earth have traveled o'er.

SONG.

ON every bough of the apple tree,
A rosy bud of love has burst.
A warm wind blows o'er the silver sea,
And sighs in the pines, and laughs on the lea
Where the violet is nursed.

The maple swings its ruby strings ;
The birds have stolen Cupid's wings ;
Each tiny heart has felt his dart,
And sends the silver forth again
In sweetest note, that sets afloat
All happy thoughts, and slays all pain.

SUMMER TWILIGHT.

FOLD your balmy wings, O breeze !

The flowers to sleep are going ;
The fireflies among the trees

Like wingèd stars are glowing.
By the wall the wayside rose
Draws her pinky nightcap close ;
Dandelion, slim and fair,
Is binding up her sunny hair ;
Daisy's nodding ; while, on high,
Sprightly dancers of the sky
'Gin to trip a measure sweet,
With their golden-sandaled feet.

Hush, sad breeze, and sink to sleep !

Cease your plaintive ditty,
Fit to make the willows weep

Leafy tears of pity !
In their dreams the roses hear ;
Each has dropt a tender tear ;
Each has hung her head in pain
At the pathos of your strain.
Low above yon western hill
Sits the hornèd lady still,
Brooding over dusky trees.
Fold your balmy wings, O breeze !

SONG OF DRYOPE.

SWEET Dryope, but let thine eyes
 Upon thy laughing baby rest ;
A tender sight, where warm he lies
 In rosy beauty on thy breast.
Look not to left ! look not to right !
The lotus-flowers are just in sight ;
Though sweet they be, and passing fair,
Of yonder purple flowers beware !

The baby turns his head and spies
 The ruddy blossoms where they grow,
And lifts his tiny hand and cries,
 Attracted by their radiant glow.
His mother speeds with eager joy
To pluck the flowers for her boy ;
Nor dreams the plant doth hold a fair
And hapless nymph imprisoned there.

She fills his rosy hands with them,
 And laughs, his wild delight to see ;
Then notes that from each broken stem
 Red drops of blood fall silently.

With horror at the fearful sight,
Her lovely face grows deathly white ;
She strives to turn and flee away ;
In vain — her feet will not obey.

O fatal act of mother-love,
To bring such agony untold !
She cannot bend, nor stir, nor move,
And all her limbs are icy cold.
About her tender form the bark
Steals swiftly upward, and, but mark ! —
Amid her ringlets' sunny sheen
A single purple flower is seen.

She dimly feels her husband near ;
His yearning face she cannot see ;
“ These parting words, Andræmon dear,
Be graven on thy memory !
Let not the tempest vent its rage
Upon my blooming foliage ;
Nor let the ax call forth one groan
From me so helpless here alone.

“ Guiltless am I of all offense ;
I did but pluck these treacherous flowers,”
She sighs, in her sweet innocence,
The tear-drops falling down in showers.
“ Oh, bid our little child beware
Of all sweet flowers, however fair,
Lest he may come to know, too late,
The anguish of his mother's fate !”

She closes now those mild blue eyes ;
Her gentle voice hath ceased to fall ;
The firm, relentless bark doth rise,
And folds her from the sight of all ;
While, clearer than all spoken words,
Is heard the song of grieving birds :
“ Though sweet they be, and passing fair,
Of purple lotus-flowers beware ! ”

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH.

YES, her folded hair is gray
As twilight of a winter day ;
And her eyes have lost their light,
Just as flowers grow dim at night ;
And her face, once smooth and fair,
Showeth many a wrinkle there.

She hath sought, and not in vain,
That sweet Fountain famed again.
Look not on her *face*, forsooth,
For the rosy signs of youth ;
Deeper far the waters start,
Gushing upward from her *heart*.

SORROW.

WHAT dost thou for us, O Sorrow,
In a world of gladness and light,
Of beauty and sunshine and sweetness?
Why comest thou with such fleetness
To darken our day with thy night?
What dost thou for us, O Sorrow?

If wild birds forever were singing
The joy that the summer doth bring,
We never could know the deep wonder
Of hearing their first glad notes, under
The gray morning skies of the spring —
If wild birds forever were singing.

Through sorrows that lie in our pathway,
More full is each pleasure, and wide,
And ever more helpful and tender
We grow in the love that we render
To all those who walk at our side —
Through sorrows that lie in our pathway.

Like wild flowers blooming in summer,
And happy o'er meadow and hill,
Some souls in the sunshine smile gladly ;
And look, though the rain falleth sadly,
Their smile is as beautiful still —

Like wild flowers blooming in summer.

What dost thou for us, O Sorrow,
Sad dusk falling after the day !
We see stars of hope sweetly shining,
And know every cloud's silver lining
Is the love which is o'er us alway.

TO E. A. M.

YOUR dear little photograph reached me last night,
And gave me most truly the deepest delight.
I have placed you in front of my glass, there to stay,
Your back turned upon it, as much as to say :
“ Oh, Vanity’s always so fatal, alack !
That thus to the looking-glass turn I my back.”
And yet, upon me, dear, you’re gazing the while,
With a look that approaches almost to a smile.
If, instead of my face, you could see in my heart,
Then, maybe, for vanity’s sake you would start ;
For *there* still more plainly your graces are seen
Than in the clear depths of the mirror’s bright sheen.

A DREAM.

IN a dream, I wandered lightly
Where, above, the stars shone brightly,
In their mystic dances sprightly,
 Whirling, in a mazy reel.
All the sky was overflowing
With the frenzy of their glowing ;
Twinkling, flashing, madly showing
 A delirium I could feel ;
Swirling into spaces dizzy ;
While the pallid moon was busy
 At her silver spinning-wheel.

Sudden, all the starry wonder
From the heavens burst asunder ;
Fell in wildering fire-flakes under —
 Earthward wildly storming down.
As in silent awe I waited,
Lo ! the stars their speed abated,
All with wondrous glory freighted
 As the jewels of a crown.
Now they fluttered low and lower,
Each as lightly as a flower
 By the wind of summer blown ;

Each as lightly as a flower —
For, by some mysterious power,
All the stars came in a shower,
 Changed to yellow butterflies.
With a joy ecstatic, crazy,
Fluttered they in circles mazy ;
Amber grew the air and hazy
 With their golden fantasies ;
While the myriad winglets stirring
Made a soft, melodious whirring,
 Filling earth and air and skies.

1887

THE WIND.

THE wind is awake and away !
Her loose hair streams behind her ;
 O'er hill and hollow,
 Where none may follow,
She flies where none may find her,
And only God's hand bind her.

The wind is awake and away !
She has set all Nature swinging ;
 Leaf in the bower
 And starry flower
Into the dance are springing.

The wind is awake and away !
The great pines roar with laughter,
 And dip like clover,
 As she sweeps over,
Her wild hair streaming after.

The wind is awake and away ;
The white spray leaps behind her ;
 Ocean and flower
 Admit her power
As she flies where none may find her,
And only God's hand bind her.

HINDU LEGEND.

AT Heaven's gate an Indian stood alone,
Whence could be seen, within, a golden throne
Awaiting him, 'mid glories nigh too great
For earthly eyes ; when straightway to the gate
The gods came down and bade him "enter in"
Where all was light and joy, untouched by sin.
The weary traveler heard the sweet request
Unmoved, nor entered to his heavenly rest,
But only said : " This gate I cannot pass
Without my wife and brothers, who, alas !
Have fallen on the road ; my good dog, too,
Is left behind ; and not till it be true
All these I loved in life with me may share
The heavenly glories, will I enter there."
In vain the gods entreated him ; for he
Was deaf to all, and scarcely seemed to see
The great celestial light about his throne,
And all the wonders meant for him alone.
'Twas not until the gods had given assent
To all he wished, that he would be content.

OUT OF THE GRAY.

Out of the gray,
Where ghostly hazes, stirred as by a breath,
Start, tremble into life, and drift away ;
Soft through the vapory folds, when night hath ceased ;
Soft through the shadowy silence of the east,
Dawn, as a flower enfolded, openeth
Out of the gray.

Out of the gray,
Where grief and pain, touched gently by the breath
Of pitying Time, at last drift far away ;
Soft in the soul, at close of sorrow's night,
Hope, like the peaceful blossom of the light,
In tremulous beauty, softly openeth
Out of the gray.

IN A SNOWSTORM.

'Tis so sweet to be alive, when youth and joy are linked
together,

That the cold white snowflakes, falling downward in the
winter weather,

Seem like flowers dropping soft

From a summer-world aloft ;

Seem like myriad petals blowing, as in apple-blossom
weather ;

"Tis so sweet to be alive, when youth and joy are linked
together !

Will it be as sweet to live when age and care are linked
together ;

Or will blossoms seem to me more like snow in winter
weather ?

If I turn, through life's long hours,

All life's snowflakes into flowers,

In my heart they'll still be keeping all the bloom of summer
weather ;

It will be as sweet to live when age and care are linked
together.

AT PARK SLIDE, MONTREAL.

THAT time I went tobogganing, I never shall forget it!
And if my head were level once, that evening quite upset it!
The full moon shone o'er ice and snow in waves of crystal
glory;
I felt that I had come to life in some old fairy story.
The still, cold air, the frosty light, the sound of bells soft
tinkling,
The torches winding down the slide like myriad fireflies
twinkling,
All sent a tremor through my blood, a wild, delicious thrilling,
That with a kind of reckless joy kept heart and brain
o'erfilling.

But wilder yet the thrill I felt when down the long chute
dashing!
The torch-lights all together flew in one unearthly flashing;
An icy comet seemed the slide, and e'en the frantic falling
Of rebel angels out of heaven was sure not more appalling.
A whiz! a whirl! an icy rush! the air flew stinging o'er us;
A dizzy height behind us lay, a precipice before us;
Yet sure and steady, swift as thought, we wildly flew, sus-
pended
Like Mahomet, 'twixt heaven and earth, when, lo! the flight
was ended.

WIND AND ROSE.

'MID a bower of sweet green leaves, when the wind was
blowing,
A wild rose showed her pretty face with pinkest blushes
glowing ;
Soon the zephyr spied her there, peeping from her bower,
And he kissed her — as he kissed every pretty flower.

Low she hung her rosy face till 'twas hid completely,
And she heard him sighing there ; none could woo more
sweetly. •

Wondrous dreams o'erflowed her heart, all a happy flutter ;
So she blushed at him again through her leafy shutter.

Soon — and he was there no more ; all her joy was over ;
And he proved himself to be but a faithless rover.
Pale she grew, and sad at heart, nor her grief might smother ;
'Mid a thousand pretty flowers he had found another.

1888

FIREFLIES.

A LITTLE wind blew over the sky
Just as the stars were breaking;
It brushed their blossoms in sweeping by,
And set them all a-shaking.

So now we see, through the dusk of all
The brooding twilight shadows,
The scattered petals the stars let fall,
Dancing over the meadows.

A FRIEND.

THE radiant beauty of her tender face
Was but an echo of her lovelier soul ;
To all things fair she lent a fairer grace ;
What was not sweet some sweetness from her stole ;
In daily loving acts she met their needs
Who dreamed of future great and noble deeds.

She strove to round her life unto that law
She'd will to be the world's, in act and word.
Where others found but ill, some good she saw,
And held from all whate'er unkind she heard ;
She'd fain see linked yet closer friend to friend,
And sought to make love deeper grow, not end.

And what she seemed to be she was in sooth,
Alike to all, *herself*, sincere and true ;
Earnest, and trusting all, for such was truth
To her — it gave her faith in those she knew ;
And if they grew indeed, beneath her spell,
More like to what she thought them, who can tell ?

She loved the world and made it fair each day
About her ; to her steps joy seemed to cling ;
Through paths of love she took her gentle way,
And dropped her words and looks like flowers
of spring ;
And though she died in youth, who but will say
The world is better for her life's short day !

TO MAY T.

How sweet a wonder came to pass
When chilly winds blew hither, thither;
May stepped across October grass,
And brought her bluest violets with her.

TO A LOVELY GIRL.

IF the beauty and charms of Eurydice fair
Were such as are thine, 'tis no wonder, I swear,
That sorrowing Orpheus should go, in his pain,
To the dark realms of Hades to find her again !

THE IDEAL.

'Tis ever this that I hear,
When the wild wind laughs or grieves,
The cry of the elm tree near,
To its myriad fluttering leaves :
Oh, bear me away, it sings,
My thousand trembling wings !
Higher than night or than day,
Away and away and away.

The joy is almost pain ;
Yet, since I so long to fly,
There must be a height to gain
Over all that is high.
I feel it, O wings, I know !
Yet may not define nor show.
Through the glow of life's sweet fire
I look and I yearn and aspire.

The white clouds, every one,
Are calling me from afar,
With the golden voice of the sun,
And silver voice of a star.
Should I sail through starry seas,
There is something higher than these ;
The truth of it thrills to me,
My trembling wings, through thee !

My head is upheld in air ;
 My foot with earth's dew is wet ;
O wings, you are strong and fair,
 Though you only flutter as yet !
I stretch out my arms on high
To the Infinite, and I cry.
Through the glow of life's sweet fire
I look and I yearn and aspire.

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